ABSTRACT: Despite the common perception that congestion is primarily an issue in large urban areas, both rural areas and small urban areas (under 50,000 population) also experience congestion – and they frequently lack the resources needed to address congestion. Lack of expert staff, fewer instrumented facilities, and characteristic differences in rural traffic flow combine to create significant challenges in reducing and managing rural congestion. The southeastern region is particularly sensitive to these challenges as the region contains many small urban centers and agriculture-based communities. The objectives of this study are to:

- Determine key characteristics of rural and small urban congestion (e.g. recurring and nonrecurring congestion, mode use, freight logistics, and special events);
- Identify resource constraints pertinent to rural and small urban communities;
- Identify or develop strategies to reduce and/or manage these congestion issues;
- Develop guidance that maps strategies to congestion issues for use by rural and small urban agencies; and
- Develop educational material (i.e. webinar, online module, short course, etc.) for use by rural and small urban agencies to help ensure successful implementation of developed guidance.

The research team will identify several such communities in the region and will maintain early and ongoing engagement with their transportation agencies. For example, Dr. Srinivasan (UF) leads the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) funded Transportation Safety Center, which works with rural counties in Florida; that work will be leveraged to identify issues and case studies and to disseminate educational material.